

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 170

By Jones U

A RESOLUTION designating June 19, 2007, as "Juneteenth Day" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Juneteenth National Freedom Day is the most recognized African-American holiday observance in the United States; for more than 137 years, Juneteenth National Freedom Day has commemorated the survival, due to God given strength and determination, of African-Americans who were first brought to this country stacked in the bottom of slave ships in a month long journey across the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, in what came to be known as the "Middle Passage," approximately eleven and one-half million African-Americans survived the voyage to the New World, though the number who died is likely greater, only to be subjected to whipping, castration, branding, rape, the tearing apart of families, and forced submission to slavery for more than 200 years after their arrival in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the day freedom was proclaimed to all slaves in the South by Union General Granger on June 19, 1865, in Galveston, Texas, more than two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, Senate Joint Resolution 11 and House Joint Resolution 56 were successfully shepherded through both houses of the 105th United States Congress in a successful effort to officially recognize Juneteenth as the independence day observance of Americans of African descent, marking the first time in over 130 years of the annual celebration that Juneteenth has been "officially recognized"; and

WHEREAS, Americans of all colors, creeds, cultures, religions, and countries-of-origin share a common love of and respect for freedom, as well as a determination to protect their right to freedom through the democratic institutions by which the tenets-of-freedom are

guaranteed and protected. The Nineteenth of June or Juneteenth Independence Day, along with the Fourth of July, completes the cycle of freedom for America's Independence Day observances. "Until All are Free, None are Free" is an oft repeated maxim that can be used to highlight the significance of the end of the era of slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation is sponsoring the premier celebration, concert, worship services, and campaign to commemorate America's second Independence Day observance, the Nineteenth of June, as one which completes the cycle of America's 18th century independence movement, initiated with the Fourth of July and the Declaration of Independence to recognize this country's movement towards a "One America," a concept advanced by a sincere dialogue of the realization of what Juneteenth historically means to all Americans, namely, promoting racial healing, restoration, and justice; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby designate June 19, 2007, as "Juneteenth Day" in Tennessee, and in support of the National Juneteenth Holiday Campaign, we encourage all Tennesseans to join in the celebration of this special day of national observance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that it is the sense of this General Assembly that the nineteenth day of each June thereafter should be observed as "Juneteenth Day" in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.